



River Network:

Connecting People, Saving Rivers



River Network workshop training at annual National River Rally.

Photo courtesy River Network Collection



Students visit a stream to learn about water quality monitoring.

Photo by Marcus Buhler

Targeted Watersheds Capacity Building Grant

River Network is a national nonprofit organization founded in 1989 which supports grassroots groups working for watershed protection throughout the country. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, the network's services reach thousands of groups through publications, conferences, training programs and one-on-one direct consulting.

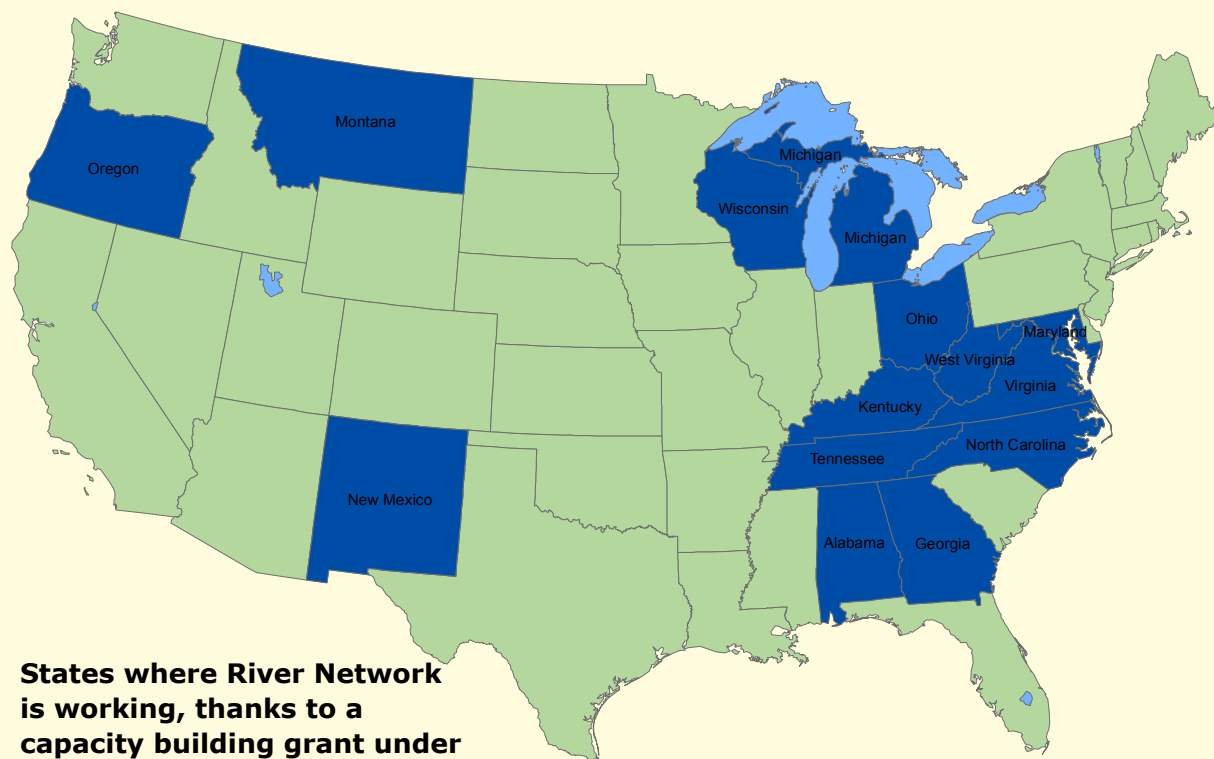
Capacity Building Makes a Difference

Thousands of local, citizen-led watershed organizations across the country work with public agencies to protect our water resources. These groups interpret scientific information for the public and help agencies implement environmental regulations and programs. Where such groups have the organizational capacity to work on water quality issues they can make a profound impact. Most struggle with limited resources to keep going over the long-term. River Network assesses the skills of these groups and their training needs in areas such as board development, major donor programs, membership programs, board fundraising, organizational sustainability and community outreach. In 2003, River Network created the Watershed Support Network to help watershed groups get the training they need to survive and be effective on the ground. In 2006 River Network concluded a three-year pilot project that trained 250 groups in six states.

Watershed Support Network

With a new capacity building grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, River Network will expand the Watershed Support Network to 15 states and offer new training opportunities for groups in the areas of community outreach and organizational effectiveness. Through this effort, River Network will strengthen the capacity of 150 watershed organizations to protect and restore water resources. The project also includes the creation of a peer-learning community and Training for Watershed Trainers to extend the effectiveness of the network to more than 15 states.





States where River Network is working, thanks to a capacity building grant under EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program.

Tracking Environmental Progress

Measuring the effectiveness of capacity building efforts can be challenging, and the need to bolster such efforts surfaced as a key recommendation from EPA's recent Targeted Watersheds Grants programmatic evaluation. River Network uses an online assessment protocol to measure organizational capacity, environmental results and programmatic success of watershed groups. Watershed groups are assessed before and after the training program. The assessment measures Indicators of Organizational Strength (budgets, staffing and volunteer patterns, and funding types) and Indicators of Best Management Practices (use of fundraising plans, annual work plans and Executive Director evaluations). The impact of this work will also be measured through a series of Community Involvement Measures and Indicators of Watershed Participation at the end of the project. The most effective groups will provide case studies and indicators of success for integrating watershed protection programs.

For more information:

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EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/twg>

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